(b) the steps taken to clear the wait-listed applications; and

(c) by when, the list would be cleared?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (SHRI ASHOK PRADHAN): (a) A total of 14024 applicants are in waiting list for telephone connections in Madhya Pradesh as on 31st October, 2003, out of which 11612 are in rural areas. Most of the rural waiting list is in the far flung areas.

(b) and (c) BSNL has planned to provide 1,06,000 DELs (Direct Exchange Lines) during 2003-2004 on wired Line and WLL, of which 25,000 are in rural areas. Most of the waiting list is expected to be cleared progressively by the end of current financial year subject to availability of resources.

Telecom facilities in rural areas of Bhopal

205. SHRI P.K. MAHESHWARI : Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have any proposal to provide public telephone facilities including Fax/STD/ISD etc. in the rural areas of Bhopal district of Madhya Pradesh;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (SHRI ASHOK PRADHAN): (a) Sir, STD/ISD public telephones are already working in rural areas of Bhopal district of Madhya Pradesh. The franchisees are at liberty to install fax machines on their STD/ISD PCOs to provide fax services.

(b) and (c) Do not arise in view of (a) above.

Introduction of Mobile phones for Tripura

206. SHRI MATILAL SARKAR: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state :

(a) by when, mobile phones would be introduced in Tripura;

(b) the maximum number of mobile phone sets earmarked for the State;

(c) whether the number is fixed up according to population of the States of the North-East; and

(d) if not, what are other criteria followed in fixing up the number of mobile phones?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (SHRI ASHOK PRADHAN): (a) Mobile Phone Service is expected to be available in Tripura by March 2004.

(b) to (d) The Licence Agreement for Cellular Mobile Telephone Service, inter-alia, provides that in the Telecom Circles, atleast 10% of the District Headquarters (DHQs) will be covered in the first year and 50% of the District Headquarters will be covered within three years of effective date of Licence. The Licensee shall also be permitted to cover any other town in a District in lieu of the District Headquarters. The choice of District Headquarters/towns to be covered and further expansion beyond 50%. District Headquarters/towns shall lie with the Licensee depending on its business decision. As such, the Government does not monitor the individual private Service Provider's future plans in respect of the number of lines to be provided/earmarked by a Service Provider for a city/town/State in a particular Service Area.

For Tripura, a capacity of 6300 lines has been planned by Bharat Sanchar Nigam Limited (BSNL) based on criteria of covering DHQs and some important National Highways. Also, as reported by M/s Reliance Telecom Limited, a subscriber capacity of 6000 lines has been planned by them based on Market Survey.

Shortage of cellular services

207. SHRI SANTOSH BAGRODIA:
SHRI GHULAM NABI AZAD:

Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that despite BSNL's claim of providing cellular service all over the country including Jammu & Kashmir, there are still many States that face shortage in terms of service, connectivity and allocation of cellular phones;